

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3997

INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR PRIORITY

USCINSCO

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEGUCIGALPA 3511

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PBOR, ES, HO

SUBJECT: CONVERSATION WITH CESAR BATRES ON POSSIBLE NEGOTIATIONS.

REF: TEGUCIGALPA 3476 (DTG 191815Z)

BEGIN SUMMARY. PRESIDENTIAL ADVISOR CESAR BATRES TOLD POLOFF ON JULY 19 THAT THE HONDURAN CHIEF OF STAFF HAD INSTRUCTIONS TO OBTAIN DETAILS OF PROPOSAL MADE BY SALVADORAN CHIEF OF STAFF ON JULY 15 CONCERNING THE ELIMINATION OF ARMED FORCES FROM DISPUTED BORDER AREAS. A NEW FOREIGN POLICY GROUP HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED TO ADVISE FONMIN PALMA ON NEGOTIATIONS WITH EL SALVADOR. BATRES WILL PARTICIPATE IN ADVISORY GROUP MEETINGS THIS WEEK AND WILL PRESENT A MEDIATION FORMULA FOR CONSIDERATION. THE GOH IS APPARENTLY PREPARED TO MAKE ONE LAST EFFORT TO ADVANCE NEGOTIATIONS AT THIS TIME; IF THE EFFORT FAILS THERE WILL BE NO FURTHER ATTEMPT UNTIL AFTER THE SALVADORAN ELECTIONS IN 1977. END SUMMARY.

1. POLOFF DISCUSSED RECENT BORDER INCIDENTS AND POSSIBLE HONDURAS/EL SALVADOR NEGOTIATIONS WITH PRESIDENTIAL ADVISOR CESAR BATRES ON JULY 19. BATRES SAID THAT DURING MEETING OF CHIEFS OF STAFF ON JULY 15 (SEE REFTEL) THE SALVADORAN
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CHIEF OF STAFF HAD SUGGESTED THAT ALL FORCES BE REMOVED

FROM THE SEVEN DISPUTED BOLSONES (POCKETS) ALONG THE BORDER IN ORDER TO REDUCE THE POSSIBILITY OF CLASHES. BATRES EXPRESSED SURPRISE THAT THE SALVADORANS WOULD MAKE SUCH A SUGGESTION BECAUSE IN THE PAST THEY HAVE BEEN UNWILLING TO DEFINE THE EXTENT AND PRECISE LOCATION OF THE DISPUTED AREAS, AND REMARKED THAT IT IS UNCLEAR EXACTLY WHAT THE SALVADORANS HAVE IN MIND. HE SAID THAT LT. COL. CESAR EL VIR SIERRA, THE ARMY CHIEF OF STAFF, HAD INSTRUCTIONS TO MEET WITH THE SALVADORAN CHIEF OF STAFF THIS WEEK TO EXPLORE THE SALVADORAN PROPOSAL IN DETAIL.

2. BATRES STATED THAT A FOREIGN POLICY ADVISORY GROUP HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED TO ADVISE FONMIN PALMA ON NEGOTIATIONS WITH EL SALVADOR. THE PURPOSE OF GROUP WILL BE TO DEVELOP A BROADER BASE OF SUPPORT FOR HONDURAN NEGOTIATIONS WITH EL SALVADOR. EX-FONMIN'S AND FOREIGN MINISTRY ADVISORS WILL FORM PART OF THE GROUP. BATRES SAID THAT THE GROUP IS MEETING THIS WEEK TO DISCUSS HIS PROPOSAL FOR "A LAST EFFORT" TO NEGOTIATE WITH EL SALVADOR BEFORE THE SALREADORNA ELECTORAL COMAIGN BEGINS IN EARNEST. HE COMMENTED THAT HE IS PREPARING A MEDIATION FORMULA SIMILAR TO THE ONE HE WORKED OUT WITH FONMIN BORGONOVO IN OCTOBER 1974. HE SAID THAT IF THE INITIATIVE IS MET WITH SALVADORAN INDIFFERENCE IT WOULD SIGNIFY THAT ANY MEANIGFUL NEGOTIATION WOULD HAVE TO BE DELAYED UNTIL SOME MONTHS AFTER THE NEW SALVADORAN REGIME TAKES POWER NEXT YEAR.

3. FONMIN PALMA TOLD POLOFF ON JULY 15 THAT HE HAD TALKED WITH FONMIN BORGONOVO AND THAT BORGONOVO HAD PROMISED TO CALL HIM BACK IN ABOUT 15 DAYS TO AGREE ON A DATE FOR A MEETING. DURING AMBASSADOR SANCHEZ DEPARTURE CALL ON JULY 16, CHIEF OF STATE MELGAR SAID THAT HE BELIEVED THAT THE GOH SHOULD MAKE ONE LAST ATTEMPT TO REACH A SETTLEMENT AND THAT IF THE ATTEMPT FAILS THERE IS NO ALTERNATIVE TO WAITING UNTIL AFTER THE SALVADORAN ELECTIONS.

4. BEGIN COMMENT: BETWEEN NOW AND THE UPCOMING MEETING OF FONMIN'S THE NEW ADVISORY GROUP WILL BE FACED WITH THE TASK OF DETERMING EXACTLY WHAT FONMIN PALMA CAN PRESENT TO FONMIN BORGONOVO IN TERMS OF A NEW NEGOTIATING INITIATIVE. CONFIDENTIAL

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IT IS CLEAR THAT, IF THE APPROACH IS MADE AND IS NOT WELL RECEIVED, THE GOH IS PREPARED TO LET MATTERS STAND AS THEY ARE UNTIL AFTER THE SALVADORAN ELECTIONS. IF SUCH IS THE CASE, THE GOH WILL CONCENTRATE ON ATTEMPTING TO KEEP THE BORDER AREA AS CALM AS POSSIBLE IN ORDER TO AVOID A POSSIBLE ESCALATION OF INCIDENTS UNTIL NEW NEGOTIATIONS ARE POSSIBLE IN 1977. END COMMENT. BARTCH

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